

## **Roseola**

Last Revised: 10/2001

# **ROSEOLA (Exanthema Subitum)**

Roseola is the most common viral rash illness that occurs in children ages 6 months to 2 years. It is sometimes referred to as Sixth Disease or, less commonly, "baby measles". Roseola is caused by a virus called human herpes virus 6 (HHV-6) and, possibly, human herpes virus 7 (HHV-7).

### **Who gets this disease?**

Roseola usually occurs in children aged 6 months to 2 years of age. It is uncommon for the disease to occur in children under the age of 3 months or over the age of 4 years. There is no known risk to pregnant women. Cases are not seasonal and usually occur throughout the year.

### **How is roseola spread?**

Humans are the only known source for roseola. It is not known how the disease is spread or what the infectious period is. It is not considered to be very infectious.

### **How soon do symptoms occur?**

Symptoms usually begin 5-15 days after exposure.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Roseola usually begins with a high fever that lasts 3 to 5 days followed by a rash that lasts 1-2 days. When the fever disappears, a rash appears, usually on the face and body. Irritability, runny nose, eyelid swelling and tiredness are sometimes present during the time of the fever. Most children, however, are alert and playful during this time.

### **How is it diagnosed and treated?**

A healthcare provider based on the symptoms diagnoses the disease. The high fever with rash occurring immediately after the fever breaks is characteristic of the disease. The healthcare provider may recommend supportive treatment of symptoms but there is no treatment that is specific for roseola.

### **How can this disease be prevented?**

There is no vaccine to prevent this disease. Generally, a child with rash and fever should be excluded from child care until seen by a healthcare provider. A child with rash and no fever may return to childcare. There are no recommendations for preventive therapy for other children attending the child care or for child care personnel.

**Reportable?**

No. Roseola is not reportable by New Hampshire law. However, public health nurses are available for consultation.